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ABSTRACT

Intended for parents of gifted and talented children as well as for teachers and administrators, the handbook provides an overview of gifted education while describing one district's program model. The district's philosophy, goals and objectives, and definition of giftedness are set forth, followed by a list of learning and behavioral characteristics of gifted and creative students. Identification measures, including screening tests and parent inventories are reviewed. The district's program model, which clusters identified gifted students at each grade level within the framework of the regular classroom, is described. The program's instructional approaches are described; these include learning centers, individualized programming guides, computer instruction, and enrichment in conversational Spanish via mentorship with high school students. Guidelines are offered for differentiating curricula and for analyzing the role of the basic curricula for gifted/talented students. Appended materials include sample parent inventories, teacher referral forms, and other evaluation forms. (CL)

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The Pine Bush Central
GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

(HANDBOOK)

(A Guide for Parents, Teachers, Administrators)

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HEY MOM, WAKE-UP!
I JUST HAD ANOTHER GREAT IDEA!



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1984



Table of Contents

Foreword.....	i
Introduction.....	ii
District Philosophy, Goals and Objectives of Gifted.....	1
District Defintion of Giftedness and Characteristics.....	2
Identification of Gifted.....	6
Program Model.....	7
Differentiation of Curriculum for Gifted.....	9
Appendix.....	11

FOREWORD

This handbook was prepared with a parental-teacher-administrator orientation in mind. As a result of reading this booklet, it is hoped that parents, teachers and administrators will be better able to:

1. define giftedness;
2. recognize giftedness (or potential) in children;
3. understand Program model of the Pine Bush Central School;
4. assist in the overall educational development of gifted children.

INTRODUCTION

When the Pine Bush Central System decided to establish a gifted and talented program in 1982, it did so with the intent of not fostering a part-time, pull-out program, but a full-time, in-house regular classroom approach. An intense study recognized the fact that children are not gifted (1) one hour of a day or week but the entire time they spend in and out of school. Thus, after much discussion, school visitations and theoretical studies, the Pine Bush Central School District adopted and implemented a program in the fall of 1982 clustering identified gifted at each grade level within the framework of the regular classroom. This concept fosters a full time academic approach and a stimulating emotional and social aspect of gifted students. The gifted and talented program thus established in the fall of 1982 is entering its fourth year.

District Philosophy

The Pine Bush Central School District recognizes its purpose is to provide appropriate educational services to all individuals under its care and jurisdiction. Additionally, it acknowledges an obligation and commitment to provide those students deemed gifted and talented "with opportunities for growth commensurate with their capabilities...nurturing their fullest development as individuals and members of the community."

District Goals and Objectives

The Pine Bush Central School District deems the following as its goals and objectives for gifted education:

1. To initiate an ongoing screening process to identify potentially gifted students; to define the needs and abilities of each gifted child.
2. To provide appropriately differentiated education beyond those experiences of the regular classroom; to furnish opportunities for students with exceptional potential to explore areas of interest in a wide range of elective activities commensurate with challenging their abilities.
3. To allow interaction between and among gifted students in order to foster self-confidence in social relationships with peers and adults.
4. To encourage self-expression and to develop higher level thinking skills.
5. To insure the success of a program for gifted education by providing educational support services to teachers through inservice training, conferences, curriculum assistance.
6. To establish an ongoing evaluation of program effectiveness by the district coordinator.

District Definition of Giftedness

Gifted and talented children, identified by professionally qualified personnel, are those who are capable of high performance and demonstrate outstanding abilities. Such gifted students are those who display outstanding ability in one or more of the areas of intellect, academic excellence, creativity, original and productive thinking, and leadership ability. These children require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

Characteristics of the Gifted and Talented

There are numerous lists of characteristics or distinguishing features and attributes of gifted and talented children. Teachers and parents should interpret any single list, including this one, as exemplary rather than exclusive. Few gifted children will display all of the characteristics. Understanding the characteristics of gifted and talented children will help parents and teachers sharpen their observations of these children in two distinct ways: (1) While characteristics do not necessarily define who is a gifted child, they do constitute observable behaviors that can be thought of as clues to more specific behaviors, and (2) these characteristics are signals to indicate that a particular child might warrant closer observation and could require specialized educational attention, pending a more comprehensive assessment.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED/TALENTED CHILDREN:

- . They typically learn to read earlier with a better comprehension of the nuances of the language. As many as half of the gifted and talented population have learned to read before entering school. They often read widely, quickly, and intensely, and have large vocabularies.
- . They commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- . They are better able to construct and handle abstractions than their age mates.
- . They are frequently able to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences which other children have to have spelled out for them.

- . They take less for granted, seeking the "hows" and "whys."
- . They display a better ability to work independently at an earlier age and for longer periods of time than other children.
- . They can sustain longer periods of concentration and attention.
- . Their interests are often both wildly eclectic and intensely focused.
- . They frequently have seemingly boundless energy, which sometimes leads to misdiagnosis of "hyperactive."
- . They are usually able to respond and relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults. They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.

CREATIVE CHARACTERISTICS:

- . They are fluent thinkers, able to produce a large quantity of possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- . They are flexible thinkers, able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- . They are original thinkers, seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information. They also have an ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- . They are elaborative thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problem.
- . They show a willingness to entertain complexity and seem to thrive in problem situations.
- . They are good guessers and can construct hypotheses of "what if" questions readily.
- . They often are aware of their own impulsiveness and the irrationality within themselves and show emotional sensitivity.

- . They have a high level of curiosity about objects, ideas, situations or events.
- . They often display intellectual playfulness, fantasize, and imagine readily.
- . They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers in expressing opinions and ideas and often exhibit spirited disagreement.
- . They have sensitivity to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic dimensions.

LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS:

- . Gifted and talented children often show keen powers of observation, exhibit a sense of the significant, and have an eye for important details.
- . They often read a great deal on their own, preferring books and magazines written for youngsters older than themselves.
- . They take great pleasure in intellectual activity.
- . They have well developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesizing abilities.
- . They have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships.
- . They tend to like structure, organization, and consistency in their environments. They may resent the violation of structure and rules.
- . They display a questioning attitude and seek information for the sake of having it as much as for its instrumental value.
- . They often are skeptical, critical, and evaluative. They are quick to spot inconsistencies.
- . They often have a large storehouse of information regarding a variety of topics which they can recall quickly.
- . They show a ready grasp of underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects.

- . They readily perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies.
- . They have a well developed common sense.
- . They often attack complicated material by separating it into its components and analyzing it systematically.

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- . They are willing to examine the unusual and are highly inquisitive.
- . Their behavior is often well organized, goal directed, and efficient with respect to tasks and problems.
- . They exhibit an intrinsic motivation to learn, find out or explore and are often very persistent. "I'd rather do it myself" is a common attitude.
- . They enjoy learning new things and new ways of doing things.
- . They have a longer attention and concentration span than their peers.
- . They are more independent and less subject to peer pressure than their age mates. They are able to be conforming or nonconforming as the situation demands.
- . They have a highly developed moral and ethical sense.
- . They are able to integrate opposing impulses, such as constructive and destructive behavior.
- . They often exhibit daydreaming behavior.
- . They may seek to conceal their abilities so as not to "stick out."
- . They often have a well developed sense of self and a realistic idea about their capabilities and potential.

Identification Process

Screening is an ongoing process in the Pine Bush Central School District. The following instruments are used to help identify gifted and talented children:

1. Pre-Kindergarten Screening Scores: A child who scores 1+ year beyond in maturity may be considered a potentially gifted child.
2. Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Achievement Test Scores): A child's cumulative composite national percentile ranking (90% or higher) indicates a good academic learner.
3. Cognitive Abilities Test: (The Standard Score gives a group IQ score). Any child 125+ is a potential candidate for the gifted program.
4. Otis-Lennon Test: Gives a measurement of school ability performance and an IQ measure. A child who is in the 9th stanine with a Group IQ of 125+ is a potential candidate. This test is given to all grade 1 students.
5. Academic Performance: A child whose cumulative academic records indicate A to A+ work is a strong potential candidate.
6. Teacher nomination/evaluation: If a teacher feels that a child may be potentially gifted, then a recommendation form is completed and referred to G&T Coordinator. G&T Coordinator then investigates child's accumulated data and determines if child should be tested.
7. Parent Inventory: If a parent feels that their child may be gifted, they may request a parent inventory from the main office of each building. It should be completed and referred back to the G&T Coordinator.
8. Slosson Intelligence Test: This individual test is given by the G&T Coordinator when deemed necessary. A child should score 125+ and beyond for consideration as a potential candidate.
9. Personal Interview with child: The G&T Coordinator conducts, whenever necessary, an interview with the potential candidate to help determine inclusion in the program.
10. Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes: This test assesses the higher-level thinking skills of students and is given to a student if necessary to further assist identification.

Program Model

The assignment of the gifted students into the regular classroom is a favored approach in the Pine Bush Central School District. Once children are identified in grades 1-6, they are clustered (grouped) together at each grade level in each elementary building and placed with a volunteer G&T teacher at each grade level.

This type of program model offers opportunities for the gifted and talented to identify themselves as individuals as well as to identify as a group member by sharing, exchanging and relating their unique learning experiences with the total class.

The methods of instruction utilized within the classroom encompasses the use of:

1. Learning centers focusing in on three areas:

Math
Science
Reading/Language Arts

2. Individualized Programming Guides - completed by teacher and coordinator focusing in on meeting the needs of the gifted. (A sample of an IPG appears in handbook.) Compacting is a method utilized in differentiating for the gifted to help determine pacing and enrichment in each subject area. The IPG's clearly illustrate that gifted students' assignments, projects, or units of study are of sufficient scope and complexity to allow the most gifted students (in certain subject areas) to use and develop their talents, while the average child works with the same assignments but not with the same degree of complexity. Enrichment in supplementary project-work is generally indicated on IPG.
3. Differentiated curriculum providing enrichment and acceleration in all subject areas where applicable. Differentiation of curriculum activities for the gifted and talented relies on the elaboration of certain variables: procedure for presenting learning opportunities, nature of the input, and expectancies for learning outcomes. Procedures for presenting learning opportunities include:
 - a) Exposure - Students are exposed to experiences, materials, and information which are outside the bounds of the regular classroom.

- b) Extension - Students are afforded opportunities to elaborate on the regular curriculum through additional allocation of class working time, materials, and experiences, and/or further self-initiated or related study.
 - c) Development - Students are provided with instruction which focuses on thorough or new explanation of a concept or a skill which is part of a general learning activity within the regular curriculum.
4. Enrichment in Conversational Spanish via mentorship with high school students. This program enhances exposure of a foreign language to elementary children and fosters and promotes the usage of a studied language by high school mentors.
 5. Critical Thinking Skills are taught. Children are encouraged to utilize the higher levels of thinking in all subject areas.
 6. Resource activities and programs allowing general interest exposure to all students with additional opportunities for any student and the gifted to do in depth, independent research. (Renzulli's - Triad and Revolving Door Concept)
 7. Computer instruction - programming and exposure to more than one kind of language...LOGO and BASIC.
 8. GALLASEUM - (Museums) Students beginning in grade 4 to learn the concepts of the museum and engage in the development and maintenance of a museum in each elementary building.

Differentiation of Curriculum

Differentiating curricula for the gifted & talented is essentially a process of individualized curricula to better match individual and group learning needs, abilities, and styles. It denotes sets of specialized learning experiences which develop the unique abilities of gifted students. It embodies recognition of different learning rates, styles, interests, abilities.

The following serves as a guide in differentiating curricula for our program (Passow, 1982, Columbia)

6 (Six) Principles of Curriculum Differentiation (Passow)

1. Content of curricula for gifted/talented should focus on and be organized to include more elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes that integrate knowledge with and across systems of thoughts.
2. Curricula should allow for development and application of productive thinking skills to enable students to reconceptualize existing knowledge and/or generate new knowledge.
3. Curricula should enable G/T to explore constantly changing knowledge and information and develop the attitude that knowledge is worth pursuing in an open world.
4. Curricula should encourage exposure to, selection, and use of appropriate and specialized resources.
5. Curricula should promote self-initiated and self-directed learning and growth.
6. Curricula should provide for development of self-understandings and the understanding of one's relationship to persons, societal institutions, nature, and culture.

The role of the regular or basic curricula for gifted/talented should be as follows: (Passow, 1982, Columbia)

1. The basic curriculum is needed to provide the foundation on which advanced conceptualization, creativity, and productive behavior can develop. However, the knowledge, skills, and understandings by the basic curriculum need not necessarily be presented to G/T in the same way as for other children. Gifted/Talented learning often does not follow typical learning patterns, while G/T learning capacities often differ from those of other students.
2. At times, the G/T will not need to pursue certain activities because they have already achieved appropriate levels of proficiency. Sometimes G/T will need to pursue elements of the basic or regular curriculum earlier or more rapidly than usual if they

are to develop their special talents. The principle of readiness for learning, based on individual developmental patterns and needs, governs the adaptations of the regular curriculum needed for G/T, just as for all learners. This does not mean that all G/T will readily master all aspects of the basic or regular curriculum. Like other students, G/T may have irregular achievement patterns, varying abilities, interests, motivations, persistence, etc.

3. A student's strengths should be nurtured while, at the same time, he/she is helped to attain desirable levels of proficiency in other areas. A child may have strength in language arts but relative weakness in mathematics, science, or some other area. A student with problems in language arts, for instance, should not be barred from a differentiated mathematics program if mathematics happens to be a strength.
4. The program should teach to the strengths of the individual student and, concurrently, should help him/her overcome weaknesses. Gifted students should not be barred from pursuing more advanced, complex, and sophisticated studies.
5. The richest possible experiences are desirable for all learners. Such experiences, desirable for all, are essential for gifted/talented learners (in order for them to develop their special gifts and talents). Without regular curricula, there would be learning gaps and inadequate bases for the development of further skills. But gifted/talented must master unusually complex systems of knowledge, as well, to perform well at advanced educational levels; without such attainment, nurturance of their special gifts and talents will be impeded.
6. Instructional acceleration may occur through compacting the regular or basic curriculum (e.g. compressing what is normally learned in one year into six months, moving learning activities to lower levels), or providing experiences that allow for greater depth or breadth of learning by using more advanced resources. The student's abilities, achievements, interests, and learning styles determine his/her readiness for instructional modifications, including accelerated pacing.

APPENDIX

The following attached information are samples of parent inventories, teacher referral (nomination) forms, and end of the year final evaluation forms, IPG forms, used in this program.

PARENT INVENTORY

NAME _____ DATE _____
 SCHOOL _____ GRADE _____
 BIRTHDATE _____

A. What special talents or skills does your child have? _____

Give examples of behavior that illustrates this. _____

B. Check the following items as best describes your child as you see him or her.

	Little	Some	A Great Deal
1. Is alert beyond his years			
2. Likes school			
3. Has interests of older children or of adults in games and reading			
4. Sticks to a project once it is started			
5. Is observant			
6. Has lots of ideas to share			
7. Has many different ways of solving problems			
8. Is aware of problems others often do not see			
9. Uses unique and unusual ways of solving problems			
10. Wants to know how and why			
11. Likes to pretend			
12. Other children call him/her to initiate play activities			
13. Asks a lot of questions about a variety of subjects			
14. Is not concerned with details			
15. Enjoys and responds to beauty			
16. Is able to plan and organize activities			
17. Has above average coordination, agility and ability in organized games			
18. Often finds and corrects own mistakes			
19. Others seem to enjoy his/her company			
20. Makes up stories and has ideas that are unique			

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PARENT INVENTORY (cont'd.)

	Little	Some	A Great Deal
21. Has a wide range of interests			
22. Gets other children to do what he/she wants			
23. Likes to play organized games and is good at them			
24. Enjoys other people and seeks them out			
25. Is able and willing to work with others			
26. Sets high standards for self			
27. Chooses difficult problems over simple ones			
28. Is able to laugh at himself (if necessary)			
29. Likes to do many things and participates whole-heartedly			
30. Likes to have his/her ideas known			
C. Reading interests (favorite type of books and/or titles of favorite books)			

D. Favorite school subject _____			
E. General attitude toward school _____			
F. Favorite playtime, leisure time activity _____			
G. Hobbies and special interests (collections, dancing, making models, swimming, singing, painting, cooking, sewing, drama, etc.) _____			

H. What special lessons, training or learning opportunities does your child have outside of school _____			

I. What are some of the influences at home or at school that may negatively influence your child's performance in school _____			

J. What other things would you like us to know that would assist us in planning a program for your child _____			

GIFTED AND TALENTED REFERRAL

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE COMPLETE IF YOU FEEL THERE IS A CHILD IN YOUR CLASS THAT SHOULD BE TESTED FOR G&T PROGRAM. BE AS DESCRIPTIVE AND EXPLICIT AS POSSIBLE IN YOUR EXPLANATIONS AND REMEMBER...THIS IS FOR AN ACADEMICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED PROGRAM.

TEACHER: _____

STUDENT: _____

GRADE: _____

DATE: _____

1. DOES THIS STUDENT EXHIBIT HIGH INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL AND THE ABILITY TO MASTER GENERAL OR SPECIFIC ACADEMIC AREAS? EXPLAIN.

2. DOES THIS STUDENT MANIFEST CREATIVE THINKING, AND/OR DEMONSTRATE CREATIVE ABILITIES IN PROBLEM SOLVING SITUATIONS? EXPLAIN.

3. DOES THIS STUDENT EXHIBIT OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP ABILITIES? EXPLAIN.

4. PLEASE NOTE ANY CHARACTERISTICS WHICH YOU FEEL THIS CHILD EXHIBITS THAT DENOTE GIFTEDNESS.

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT EVALUATION: End of the Year Evaluation

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

DATE: _____

ACADEMIC ABILITY:

READING:

MATH:

NOTE:
(Special Additional Comments)

CREATIVITY:

LEADERSHIP:

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Area of Focus: Acceleration and/or Enrichment

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMING GUIDE
(Student's progress, level of work, enrichment/acceleration)

NAME OF STUDENT _____ TEACHER _____

SCHOOL _____ GRADE _____ PERIOD COVERED _____

Curriculum: General	Compacting	(A) (E) Acceleration and/or Enrichment

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